WE CLAIM:

1.　　A computer-executable method of processing financial information substantially in real time, the method including the steps of:

(a) receiving incoming stochastic data records from any of a plurality of disparate systems relating to any of: (i) financial transactions, (ii) financial instruments, (iii) financial institutions, (iv) customers, and (v) financial transaction counterparties;

(b) converting the incoming stochastic data records into a common data format substantially in real time;

(c) consolidating the converted stochastic data records by storing the data records on a consolidated database in conformance with a predefined industry standard;

(d) receiving data inquiries from at least one of: (i) customers, (ii) financial institution representatives, and (iii) financial transaction counterparties, requesting information from the consolidated database; and

(e) in response to the received data inquiry, providing real time access to the requested information from the consolidated database;

wherein the consolidated database is coupled to a controller for controlling database access from any of a plurality of computer servers;

wherein the controller is coupled to a plurality of computer servers including:

(i) an accounting information server for processing messages that contain transactions, and for deriving positions, lots and balances on a trade date and settlement date accrual accounting basis;

(ii) a market data information server that processes messages that contain data records from any of a plurality of disparate market data sources; and

wherein the controller is-coupled to:

(i) a calculation server for performing financial calculations including gain/loss and financial valuations;

(ii) an alert notification server that alerts users when a financial threshold specifying at least one of a credit limit and a trading limit has been crossed;

(iii) a data distribution server for electronically distributing data to users on a recurring and/or periodic basis; and

(iv) a search engine server for providing free-form searches against information stored in the consolidated database.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) further includes the step of recalling an input dependent business rule and converting data in accordance with one or more business rules.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein step (b) further includes the step of using one or more conversion matrices to convert the incoming data records into a common data format.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein step (e) further includes the step of responding to a received data inquiry-by providing reports on a regular, scheduled, recurring, or periodic basis.

5. The method of claim w wherein step (d) further includes the step of specifying a financial transaction.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein step (e) further includes the step of responding to a received data inquiry by subsequently providing a report substantially in real time upon receipt of any incoming stochastic data record relating to the financial transaction specified by the received data inquiry.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein, on an ongoing basis, incoming stochastic data records are received regarding at least one of financial transaction position changes, financial transaction lots and cash balances, and cost bases for each of a plurality of transaction positions and lots.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) further includes the step of determining one or more cost bases for each position and lot in a financial transaction in both trading currency as well as multiple base currency equivalents.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) further includes the step of calculating currency and market gain/loss.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) further includes the step of aggregating payables and receivables.

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11. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) further includes the step of performing amortization and accretion.

12. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) includes the step of performing income accrual calculations.

13. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) further includes the step of maintaining position, cash, and valuation histories.

14. The method of claim 7 wherein step (b) further includes the step of maintaining buying power and margin maintenance amounts for any of customers, funds, products, traders, investment managers, and financial transaction counterparties.

15. The method of claim 7 wherein step (c) is performed by updating a consolidated database that is structured according to a relational database model that relates information pertaining to settled and forecast financial transactions, financial instruments, customers, counterparties, employees, organizational units, and financial institutions.

16. The method of claim 15 further including the step of providing a library of business objects for facilitating access to the consolidated database according to any of a plurality of subjects including accounts, customers, positions, stocks, bonds, derivatives, financial transactions, and counterparties to a specified financial transaction, irrespective of the manner in which information is physically arranged on the consolidated database.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the consolidated database further includes a time series index and a search index.

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18. The method of claim 1 further including the step of proactively alerting a user substantially in real time upon the existence of a forecast or settled transaction, market change, or customer-counterparty change that breaches a predetermined financial threshold specified by the user.

19. The method of claim 2 further including the step of storing one or more business rules into the consolidated database.

20. The method of claim 19 further including the step of providing a mechanism by which a user may modify a stored business rule in the consolidated database.

21. The method of claim 2 wherein each business rule designates specific information that is to be derived from an incoming financial transaction, market data record, and/or customer/counterparty update record.

22. The method of claim 1 wherein the steps of receiving incoming stochastic data, converting the incoming stochastic data, and combining the converted data are performed so as to provide a continuous, real-time integration of customer, market, and financial services firm information.